



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**CHITTENDEN COUNTY COMMUNITY LEADERS COME TOGETHER TO RELEASE  
2013 ECOS ANNUAL REPORT: *THE STATE OF CHITTENDEN COUNTY***

**Burlington, VT** – On Friday, January 31, 2014, community leaders from the Chittenden County ECOS Partnership joined together to release the first edition of the ECOS Annual Report, a report on the state of Chittenden County.

This report provides over 80 indicators that track the progress of Chittenden County against the ECOS goals related to the **Economy, Environment, Quality of Place, and Community**. The ECOS Plan is the regional plan for Chittenden County including the metropolitan transportation plan and comprehensive economic development strategy.

“It is not usual to see this group standing together shoulder to shoulder, saying, ‘there are issues that we jointly care about in this community,’” said Martha Maksym, Executive Director of United Way of Chittenden County. Maksym cited the interconnectedness of sectors as a point of success in making progress on the ECOS Plan. “The ECOS Project has allowed us all to come together around an idea that we all need to plan together and use the resources we have to help move a collective plan,” said Maksym. “Going forward, we’ll continue to build relationships and partnerships across sectors that will really help us achieve the ECOS goals.”

During the press conference, the ECOS Partnership highlighted the trends, issues and accomplishments Chittenden County has experienced over the last year, as well as a number of action items needed to improve the state of the County. These highlights were pulled directly from the full 2013 ECOS Annual Report.

“Every decision that a community makes has the opportunity to improve the health of its residents,” said Heather Danis, Burlington’s District Director at the Vermont Department of Health. “Healthy community design can raise the bar for everyone and help eliminate differences in health outcomes that are largely influenced by the environments in which we live, learn, work and play.”

Charlie Baker, Executive Director of the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission, highlighted an area in which significant progress has been made in community design. “This past year, we had more than 86% of new developments [in Chittenden County] happening where communities planned for growth,” said Baker. “This has been a great turn-around, and credit goes to our development community and municipalities for making that kind of shift in how we develop our communities.”



Regarding the health of our communities, Penrose Jackson, Director of Community Health Improvement at Fletcher Allen Health Care, noted that each year Fletcher Allen invests over half a million dollars in the community, focusing on helping people with the social determinants of health. “We know that what keeps us healthy is not medical care,” said Jackson. “It’s certainly a very important part and when we need it, we need excellent care – but it’s about 10% of what keeps us healthy.” Jackson noted that the remainder of what keeps us healthy is partially our genetics and partially the communities we live in and the environments in which we dwell – but that about 40% is our own behaviors. Helping the Chittenden County community maintain good behaviors, or change and improve behaviors when needed, is a key focus for Vermont’s largest health care facility.

Frank Cioffi, President of the Greater Burlington Industrial Corporation (GBIC), weighed in on the state of the economy and workforce in Chittenden County and highlighted a few priority actions for the upcoming year. “The county is doing really well,” noted Cioffi. “We continue to be the economic driver for the state of Vermont.”

As an improvement to Chittenden County’s technology workforce, Cioffi cited the upcoming release of a new Web site GBIC has been working on in collaboration with the Vermont Technology Council, which is made up of technology businesses, the government and institutions of higher education. The site, *Innovate Vermont*, is “a virtual front door to entrepreneurial support and resources in the state of Vermont,” said Cioffi, and will serve to match Vermont technology companies with open internships with students in higher education seeking experience in the field.

With a focus on collective impact when addressing the challenges that face Chittenden County, the ECOS Partnership remains committed to working together to build upon collaborative successes and address areas of concern. “No one piece will bring success without the others,” the Partnership noted in their introduction to the report.

For more information on the ECOS Project and to download the full or summary version of 2013 ECOS Annual Report, please visit [ecosproject.com](http://ecosproject.com).

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